

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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March 8, 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR THE NSCIC WORKING GROUP

FROM: A. W. Marshall *AWM*
SUBJECT: Study of the Jordanian Crisis

The Executive Summary of the Jordanian Crisis raises most of the essential issues. The study itself gives, in my opinion, an accurate picture of most of the major interests of the policymakers and the performance of the agencies of the community in meeting their needs. In this memorandum I want to highlight some major issues as I see them and to raise questions about possible actions for the Working Group to discuss.

I agree completely with Bronson Tweedy's recommendation that a small task force consider the three crisis studies and prepare recommendations for action. A variety of problems in such areas as communication, the quality of analysis and sensitivity to consumer needs have appeared in all three studies. We now have a reasonable body of evidence to document them, examine them in different contexts, and discuss feasible solutions. Some recommendations will warrant review and action by the Principals; others can be communicated more informally to the DCI staff and the appropriate intelligence community managers.

In other cases we are faced with a situation in which an important issue has been raised (e.g., the problems in using third party intelligence) but the studies have not been able to provide a detailed enough understanding of the nature and causes of the problem to allow the formulation of recommendations. Even in the case of the communications problem I believe that we may need to undertake some additional studies. Studying the complex communication processes and their problems two years after the event probably cannot provide the detailed diagnosis of the problem needed to design appropriate solutions. I believe that the task force ought also to be tasked with developing proposals for further studies,

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NSC review(s) completed.

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perhaps of a different character, focused on those problems the three studies indicate are important, but for which they do not provide an adequate basis for recommendations.

Dominance of Current Reporting

The Jordanian study accurately points out that the intelligence community became oriented towards producing factual reports of events during the crisis. While a timely flow of factual reporting is necessary, the policy-maker also needs products with a wider perspective and more in-depth analysis.

This insensitivity to consumer needs reflects both an absence of consumer guidance and problems in intelligence management. In some cases, such as monitoring of Soviet and other government reactions to U.S. force deployments, policymakers must insure that more information on U.S. moves is provided to intelligence. However, the more general and continuing interests of policymakers are not so obscure, and intelligence managers should be able to direct the efforts of analysts to meeting these needs without waiting for detailed guidance. For example, concern for Soviet intentions and actions, for the Middle East balance, and for the longer-term impact of various crisis outcomes are not unusual topics. The study contends that some relevant analyses of these issues had been completed prior to the crisis, but since they were not new they were ignored by the decisionmakers and their staffs. It is unrealistic to expect policymakers to maintain a library of all past reports. Some mechanism is needed to call attention to still relevant reports or to repackage and reissue their substantive judgments and findings.

To seek an antidote to the dominance and volume of current reporting, the Working Group might consider recommending several possible actions. For example:

Prob -- The assembling of wrap-up assessments at the beginning of a crisis.

Prob -- Periodic assessments during the crisis of the current and prospective roles of the SU and PRC and the impact of alternative crisis outcomes.

 -- The separating of intelligence into products for summarizing events and products for presenting analyses.

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Difference of Perspective between Intelligence Analysts and Policymakers

There is a major difference in perspective between top-level decisionmakers and analysts that appears to significantly affect the capability of the intelligence community to serve these decisionmakers. The problem is mentioned on pages 10 and 11 of the study report, but is considered to be intractable. In my view it is a very serious and important problem that deserves much more study and discussion.

The Jordanian crisis is replete with examples:

-- The top-level people saw the Jordanian civil war as part of the much bigger, more complex situation involving the U.S. and the Soviets as the major players. However, the analysts involved were Middle Eastern or Jordanian experts who focused on the problem more narrowly.

-- The top-level people were more concerned than the analysts with the intangibles of the situation, including the longer-term impact of particular outcomes, the precedents that might be set, the perceptions by other countries of U.S. performance, etc.

-- The policymakers believe that changes in deployment and level of alert of U.S. military forces can be used to influence foreign decisionmakers' perceptions of the consequences of their actions, U.S. level of concern, etc., and to improve the outcome from the USG's point of view. There is some evidence that typical intelligence analysts do not share this view.

The difficulty in analysts' perceiving what the game looks like from the top, what the nature of the game is, is a significant barrier to their doing a better job. Some suggestions which the Working Group might consider are:

-- Urging more extensive DCI debriefings after WSAAG and other meetings with top-level decisionmakers.

-- Assignment of responsibility to someone on the staff of the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs to communicate a top-level view of the issues of most interest, to

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monitor community responses and supply corrective guidance when required.

-- Development for training purposes of a few highly classified case studies on political/military crises which explore how the crisis management problems look to key decisionmakers.

I consider the perspective problem to be more complex and deeper than can be solved with a few procedures to improve communications. The working-level analyst and manager now seem unable to appreciate the policymakers' perspectives. Something has to be done to change this.

The Role of Intelligence in the Use of U.S. Military Forces for Demonstrations

In most crises U.S. military forces are involved in preparations to take care of contingencies that could arise, and these preparations and other movements of these forces are conceived as moves designed to influence the calculations of the decisionmakers in other involved governments. As pointed out above, U.S. policymakers indeed tend to view these moves as among the most important instruments they have in influencing the outcome of the crisis. The intelligence community appears to play a surprisingly small role.

I tend to be skeptical of the conclusions reached in the study that no reactions to U.S. force deployments occurred in the Jordanian crisis. The intelligence community may not have recognized any reaction, but, given their lack of awareness of U.S. moves and other barriers to perception and involvement, I do not find that judgment convincing.

Other studies confirm the striking degree to which intelligence agencies are uninvolved in the design and carrying out of what top-level people believe are the major moves in the crisis. An effort perhaps ought to be made to examine how intelligence could:

-- More effectively assist in the design and carrying out of military demonstrations.

-- Increase its monitoring of the effects of U.S. crisis moves.

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Third Party Intelligence

The increasing cost and political liability of some overseas collection efforts may force U.S. intelligence to rely more and more on third party intelligence of various sorts. Unfortunately, examining this question in the NSCIC studies has not been very fruitful. The Working Group may wish to consider studying the issue itself or directing the DCI to do so. Questions which may be relevant include:

-- What various arrangements with third parties are now in existence? How could these change?

-- What new arrangements are likely to be made?

-- What is the impact of using third party sources on such issues as: timeliness of data; types of subject covered; confidence in data.

-- What guidelines can be established for managing third party relationships?

After-Action Studies

None of the crises studied to date were followed by an immediate formal or informal investigation of how intelligence performed. Some institutional learning occurred between the crises of 1970 and 1971 at least on the NSC staff. Support obtained for the Indo-Pak crisis reflected lessons previously learned. The Working Group may want to recommend that the DCI, in the future, perform such after-action evaluations as the NSCIC has attempted, but immediately following the event.

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